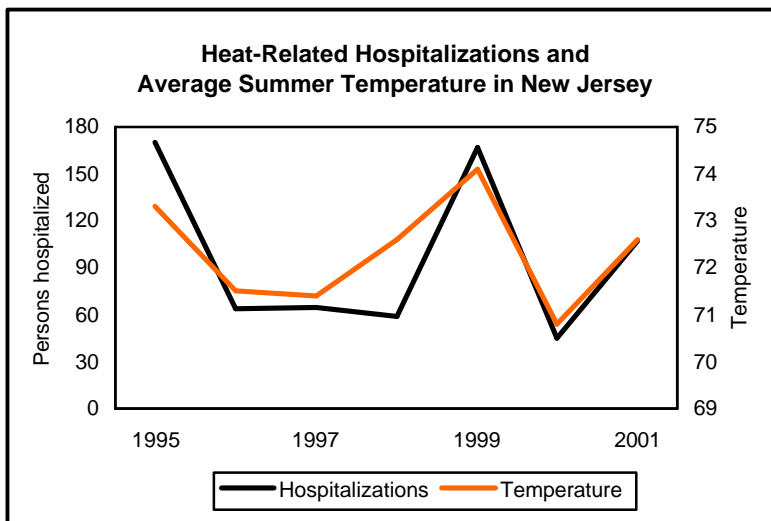


## Beat the Heat! Avoid Heat-Related Illnesses

- ✧ People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating but under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly and very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs.
- ✧ In addition to exacerbating certain preexisting health conditions, overexposure to excessive heat can cause heat stroke, sunstroke, heat collapse, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion due to water depletion or salt depletion.
- ✧ Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include young children (under 4 years of age), persons 65 and older, persons who are overweight, and persons who are ill or on certain medications.
- ✧ Typically, in New Jersey, fewer than five people die annually due directly to excessive heat. However, 10 people died in 1995 and 30 died in 1999, one of the hottest summers on record. These numbers do not include a significant number of heat-related deaths directly attributed to other causes which are exacerbated by the heat.



- ✧ Overexposure to summer heat causes between 25 and 170 hospitalizations in New Jersey annually depending on the average outdoor temperature. The majority of those hospitalized in New Jersey are male, aged 65-84, and are hospitalized for 3 or more days.
- ✧ Additionally, less severe cases of heat-related illness send many people to hospital emergency departments or only require treatment at home.
- ✧ To beat the heat, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend staying in air conditioned buildings; drinking water or other non-alcoholic beverages; wearing lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing; and reducing or eliminating strenuous outdoor activities or doing them during cooler parts of the day.
- ✧ If your home is not air conditioned, spend time in public facilities that are, such as movie theaters, libraries, and shopping malls. While electric fans provide some relief when temperatures are slightly elevated, they will not prevent heat-related illness when the temperature goes above the mid-90s.
- ✧ Check on elderly or ill relatives and neighbors and anyone who does not have air conditioning. Never leave your child, pet, or anyone in a closed car on a hot day.

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: [www.state.nj.us/health/chs](http://www.state.nj.us/health/chs)

For more prevention tips and information on heat-related illnesses from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/extremeheat/](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/extremeheat/)

For first aid tips for heat exhaustion or heat stroke from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000101-d000200/d000105/d000105.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000101-d000200/d000105/d000105.html)

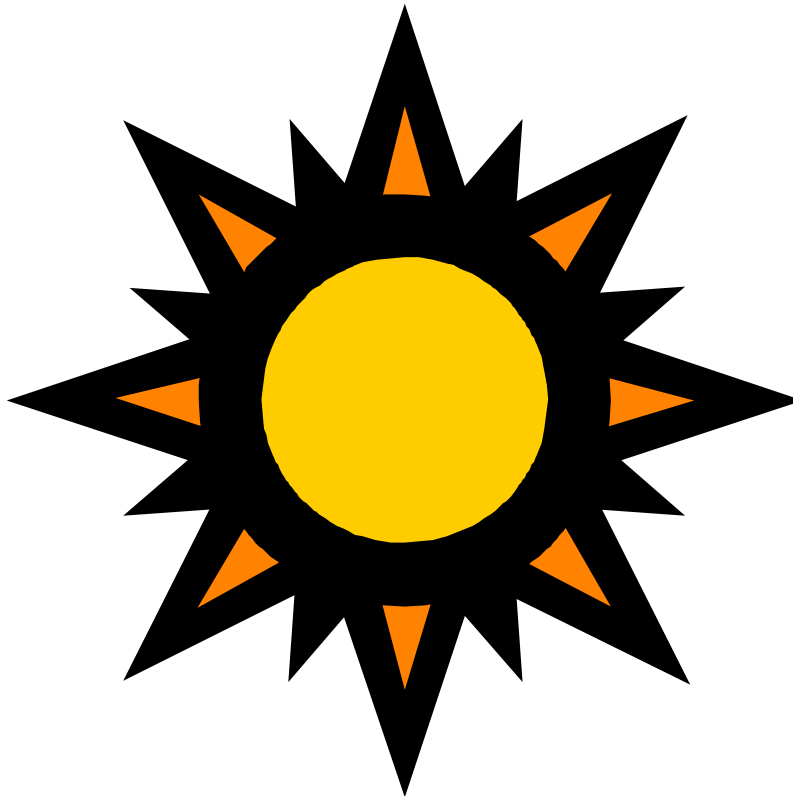
Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:  
New Jersey 1993-2001 Uniform Billing hospitalization file, unpublished data

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:  
New Jersey 1990-2000 Multiple Cause of Death Files, unpublished data

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health:  
[Extreme Heat Fact Sheet](#)

U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration:  
[Climate at a Glance](#)  
[Storm Events](#)



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